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More open borders for those left behind[1]

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1. Introduction

In philosophical debate about migration and the crossing of international borders discussion is generally focused either upon the interests and moral standing of migrants, or of those already-resident in the countries migrants wish to enter.[2] Thus, regardless of whether one adopts a more liberal stance, such as that defended by Joseph Carens (1987; 1992; 2013), Sarah Fine (2016) and Kieran Oberman (2016a) with regard to immigration and Michael Blake (Blake, 2016a; 2016b; 2017; Brock and Blake, 2015) with regard to emigration, or a less liberal one, defended with regard to immigration by David Miller (1995; 2005; 2016a, 2016b) and Christopher Wellman (2008; 2016; Wellman and Cole, 2011) and, with respect to emigration, by Lea Ypi (2008) and Anna Stilz (2016), it is

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[2] This is in contrast to the empirical literature where those left behind have received considerable attention, notably in discussions of brain-drain in development economics.

commonly assumed that the moral subjects one ought to have in mind when weighing up the arguments are those directly impacted by migration.[3]

An important exception to these dominant standpoints has been the work of Gillian Brock (Brock, 2009a; 2009b; 2016a; 2016b; 2017; Brock and Blake, 2015) who makes a powerful case for qualified restrictions upon skilled emigration on the grounds of its brain-drain effects upon poorer migrant sending countries.[4] This notwithstanding, and whilst Brock's contribution represents a significant opening of the conceptual terrain, there is good reason to believe that it goes only part of the way to addressing the unintended disservice that the dominant standpoints do to all who may have a stake in that debate's outcome. It is for this reason that, whilst endorsing and indeed expanding upon Brock's evaluative approach, I will argue that *defenders* of a more permissive stance can also incorporate the interests of those that migrants leave behind into their arguments. Most importantly, and to further signal where my agreement with Brock will end, I will also show that this is something that defenders of open borders not only can

[3] For an overview of the debate largely conducted from the migrant/already-resident perspective see Wellman, C. H. and Cole, P. (2011) and Fine, S. and Ypi, L. (2016). For a rejection of the special obligations assumption that underlies the social justice argument see Abidazeh, A. (2016). For a rejection of restrictions for those whose values are incompatible with liberal democracy see Carens, J. (2013, 176-7).

[4] See Brock, G. and Blake, M. (2015). Brock's co-author Michael Blake deploys a variety of ethical arguments against her position (Brock and Blake 2015, 156-78), and in defence of his own (Blake 2016a, 2016b, 2017) though from the migrant-centred standpoint.

but *should* do, for it provides a set of compelling reasons for her and other opponents of this stance such as Miller, Wellman, Ypi and Stilz to endorse it.

In addition to its different evaluative approach and normative stance, my argument will also be distinctive with respect to the philosophical perspective it employs to make its case. In departing from the dominant migrant-centred standpoint assumed by a defenders of the liberal view such as Carens and Blake, and instead addressing the interests of those left behind, I will draw upon the epistemic tradition of liberalism associated with thinkers such as Hayek.[5] More specifically, the epistemic approach will show that we have persuasive conceptual reasons to believe that the needs of those left behind are likely to be addressed by more open borders in ways which less open regimes cannot replicate. Central here will be the rôle that the immigrant remittance-sending that more open borders make possible plays in stimulating development in poorer states.

Importantly, the position that will be defended here is not only significant because of its new normative frame of reference. Part of that defence also speaks in a direct way to the concern that liberals have in responding to arguments against migration in general and to immigration from poorer to wealthier countries in particular. Whether it is because of the effects that the inflow of low- or unskilled migrants and their dependents from poorer countries have upon welfare budgets, upon the employment opportunities and wages of the already-resident, or because of concerns about community cohesion and

[5] For a discussion of the epistemic liberal tradition and of Hayek's place in it see Tebble (2016).

the erosion of liberal democratic values, such arguments are often compelling.[6] Indeed, they are so compelling that it is now those who defend a liberal stance towards migration who often find themselves on the defensive. Whilst not wishing to dismiss concerns about culture, values and identity, in defending the liberal position my focus will be on the economic concerns that stimulate scepticism about immigration in destination countries. More specifically, I will be concerned to advance a consequentialist argument about the medium- to long-term economic effect of emigration upon poorer countries that also addresses this scepticism in wealthier countries and the pressures to migrate that give rise to it.

Despite its presumption in favour of a more open stance, my argument will be qualified in several respects. Firstly, and following Carens (2013, 237), I will not claim that the arguments one may advance in favour of more open borders *always* trump those one may advance against them of which, in addition to concerns about brain-drain, national security and cultural cohesion, social justice (Miller, 1995; 2004, 28-31) and public health are the most common.[7] Rather, my concern will be to defend *more* open borders rather than *fully* open borders. Second, and affinities with Carens's normative stance notwithstanding, I will not limit my case for more open borders to wealthy

[6] On the threat to liberal democratic values that immigration may present see Tebble (2006).

[7] For arguments for restrictions based on cultural and ecological concerns see Miller, D. (2005). For a rejection of the special obligations assumption that underlies the social justice argument see Abidazeh (2016). For a rejection of restrictions even for those whose values are incompatible with liberal democracy see Carens (2013, 176-7).

democratic states. Unlike the presumption in *The Ethics of Immigration*, where 'the control that democratic states exercise over immigration plays a crucial role in maintaining unjust global inequalities and in limiting human freedom unjustly' (Carens 2013, 230; 2013, 306-9, 315, n. 3), I will claim that more open borders are appropriate for *all* states, including poorer migrant-sending states. Furthermore, I will not discuss the right of states, including states with more open borders, to determine whether immigrants should enjoy full rights of citizenship, or the grounds upon which they may terminate or attach conditions to their residence.[8] Such questions are, of course, worthy of investigation in a more fully worked out epistemic liberal theory of justice in migration. Finally, and as has been suggested above, for two reasons my argument will be conceptual in nature rather than empirical. The first reason for this is that defenders of more open borders are at a disadvantage with regard to empirical evidence precisely because the world in which we live, and from which they would need to draw their evidence, is one increasingly dominated by *less* open borders. Any evidence to back up their claims is, therefore, likely to be conspicuous, if not by its absence, then by its relative paucity. Moreover, and in any case, to the extent that there is evidence to attest to their effectiveness as poverty alleviators, the jury is still out as to whether remittances either cancel out or at least counterbalance the economic costs of brain-drain (Barry, 2011: 32; Brock and Blake 2015: 43, 159; Brock 2016: 180; Blake: 2016; Oberman 2016b: 106-7). My argument, therefore, will be about what we can reasonably expect the

[8] See Blake (2013), Anderson, B., Gibney, M. J. and Paoletti, E. (2011) and Lenard (2015).

likely effects of more open borders upon poorer migrant sending countries to be and will not make specific claims about particular cases.

Subsequent to giving an overview of the conceptual terrain of the debate about migration justice, in the section that follows I will draw upon the epistemic liberal literature to defend the claim that it is possible to include the interests of those left behind in the case *for*, and not just against, more open borders. Central to this case will be the likely effects of the unique remittance-based mechanism of poverty alleviation that more open borders make possible. In sections 3 and 4 I will further substantiate the epistemic case by responding to some objections. The first of these is that the individualistic and discretionary mode of decision-making that remittance sending embodies means that they are unlikely to be a stable means of helping the global poor. In section 4 I will invoke the epistemic liberal standpoint to respond to the further objection that remittances are likely to be insufficient to address the needs of the global poor, and that because they cannot be relied upon to allocate resources to those who need them most, they are likely to fail to adequately compensate for the brain-drain effects of skilled migration that the more open borders they require also make possible. Before concluding I will consider, in section 5, the impact of our argument upon the question of obligations of justice to the world's poor, including Kieran Oberman's (2015) important defense of state based cross border cash payments. Finally, and most significantly for this paper's wider purposes, in this section I will also consider the standing of the dominant migrant/already-resident standpoint within which debate about migration justice is typically conducted and how, precisely because it is about how migrant push-factor conditions in poorer countries are

most likely to be improved, the argument made here may also address scepticism about immigration in wealthier receiving countries.

2. Migration justice and the epistemic case for more open borders

Migrants, the already-resident and migration justice

The philosophical literature on migration offers a diversity of starting points from which to defend more open borders. Carens (1987; 1992; 2009), for instance, has defended them on numerous grounds, including in terms of their consistency with Rawlsian, Nozickian and utilitarian consequentialist premises and, most recently, on the grounds of their consistency with democratic principles of equality of opportunity and liberty (2013).[9] Moreover, and as Miller has clarified in *Strangers in Our Midst* (2016a), in addition to liberty and equality of opportunity arguments, open borders may also be defended on common (world) ownership and on human rights grounds, each of which he rejects in defending the democratic state's right to control entry into its territory.[10] This wide range of avenues to more open borders notwithstanding, it is not our purpose to

[9] For a libertarian defence see Block, W. (1998). Unlike a strict utilitarian approach, I do not assume that the beneficial consequences of more open borders are precisely quantifiable, either in terms of happiness, well-being, GDP or some other scale of value. Rather, I claim along with Bader (1997), Bauböck (2009) and Sangiovanni (2007) that they are beneficial in general terms.

[10] For a defence of open borders based upon economic benefits to the already-resident in migrant *recipient* countries see Powell, B. (2015). For a humanitarian defence centred upon the moral standing of migrants see Kukathas, C. (2005).

offer either rebuttals of Miller's criticisms or to reject directly his own more sceptical position. Rather, it will be contended that in assuming migrant- and already-resident-centred standpoints respectively, both sides of the migration debate are often unhelpfully narrow with respect to the range of subjects whose interests and moral standing are considered. More specifically, they usually fail to include the interests of those that migrants leave behind - construed both as identifiable individuals such as family members (or those migrants leave behind) and as unknown fellow nationals (or those left behind by migration) - where they are permitted to cross international boundaries.[11]

An important exception to the migrant/already-resident justificatory standpoint is that of brain-drain critiques of skilled emigration where, as Miller (2005: 198), Wellman (2008: 128), Ypi (2008: 411) and Brock (Brock and Blake, 2015) have noted, a more open stance encourages the departure of the most talented and best educated from poorer countries to the detriment of their development.[12] The brain-drain critique of skilled emigration is not only significant, however, because it shows how the interests of those left behind are relevant to debate about migration and justice. Precisely because it is typically discussed as part of a critique of the normative stance defended here, it suggests that *defenders* of more open borders ought to be circumspect about expanding the range of moral subjects whose interests should feature in their arguments. Much, therefore, rests upon the question of the likely poverty alleviating effects of more open borders versus the likely poverty-exacerbating effects of skilled emigration brain-drain, for if we

[11] I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer at *Ethnicities* for this perspicuous formulation of the distinction.

[12] See also Carens (2013: 183-4) and Oberman (2013)

have reason to think that the gains to be had by the former are cancelled out by the costs imposed by the latter then it follows that those left behind would be better off in a world of migration restrictions, supplemented with foreign direct investment and foreign aid. Thus, following authors such as Brock (Brock and Blake 2015: 43, 250-252; Brock 2016a: 177) who is sure to point out that restrictions upon skilled emigration are only justified if brain-drain results in net *losses* for poorer countries, the case for defenders of more open borders to expand the range of subjects considered relevant to the debate about migration justice needs to show that even if skilled emigration brain-drain *is* one result of the liberal stance, there are other net *gains* that are likely to compensate for it.

The epistemic case for more open borders

How, then, could more open borders be of benefit not only to migrants but also to those migrants leave behind, thus reducing the likelihood of their needing to follow them? Despite her broad scepticism of skilled migration Gillian Brock (Brock and Blake 2015: 41-43; Brock 2016a: 178-9; 2017: 157) does acknowledge its positive effects upon those left behind, particularly as these relate to human capital formation, the benefits of links with diaspora communities and the financial and social capital brought back by returnees.[13] The most important positive effect of all, however, is remittances (Barry 2011: 31-32; Brock 2017: 157). As has been widely noted, remittances represent a larger volume of cross-border resource transfer than foreign direct investment and foreign aid combined, a fact that is doubly impressive given that this occurs in a world of relatively

[13] See also Barry (2011: 37), Blake (Brock and Blake, 2015; 162-5) and Rapoport (2016: 128-9).

closed borders.[14] Indeed, the most recent figure amounts to approximately what would be transferred were the United Nations to pass a resolution mandating that each year all the residents of Austria direct the entirety of their productive efforts to poverty alleviation in the developing world.

Impressive as these figures are, however, we should not be rushed by them into endorsing more open borders. First, what matters is the *effect* of remittances upon development and as Brock (Brock and Blake 2015: 43; Brock 2016a: 180), Blake (Brock and Blake 2015: 159; Blake 2016b) and Oberman (2016b; 106-7) point out, we should not expect political theorists to be able to gauge this with much success. This, of course, presents a potentially significant objection, because it implies that the serious justificatory work for remittances and more open borders may have to be done by other, social scientific rather than philosophical, fields of enquiry such as development economics. Yet, such a response would be as unwarranted as it is unhelpfully compartmentalised in its conception of the division of labour between conceptual and empirical enquiry. First, turning to social science may be of little help, for as Christian Barry (2011), Brock (Brock and Blake, 2015: 110, 160) and Oberman (2015: 241-2) also readily concede, the ever-changing empirical data on the effects of remittances appear to buttress arguments *on both sides of the debate*. Moreover, Brock (Brock and Blake 2015: 43) also concedes that the same indeterminacy is manifested in the empirical literature on brain-drain,

[14] Remittances to low- and middle-income countries (US$): 2014 435.4bn, 2015 431.5bn, 2016 421.9bn, 2017 442bn, 2018 529bn, 2019 550bn (projection). World Bank Group (2019: vii).

where effects vary 'considerably for different countries of origin, especially given population size, skill levels within those populations, and so forth.'

Secondly, and these ambiguities notwithstanding, we can in any case make persuasive conceptual claims as political philosophers about the *likely* consequences of more open borders that do important work in the debate. More specifically, and provided we have plausible theoretical foundations, we can offer a set of principles that will indicate what the empirical data are likely to show and to which empirical social science may thereafter turn its attention. That is, in the case of debate about migration justice we can offer what Friedrich Hayek (1967) called a philosophically defensible 'pattern prediction' with respect to the likely economic effects of more open borders upon the global poor. This, of course, is precisely what Brock has done in her own consequentialist assessment of the likely effects of skilled migration where, as we have seen she concedes that the rate of resource transfer via remittances is impressively high. In a similar vein, however, she does remain unconvinced of the overall case for them. '[R]emittances', Brock (2017: 157) claims,

> can lead to government underinvestment in beneficial development, exacerbate existing inequalities, create dependence, and, unless well managed, do not necessarily contribute to funding important public goods such as healthcare and education, or address underlying structural causes of poverty. Remittances also tend to decline over time and fuel further migration as citizens become more aware of wage differentials.[15]

[15] See also her comments in Brock and Blake, 2015: 44-5.

The instability objection to remittances and more open borders

Such objections about likely effects, moreover, are not the only ones that may be raised against the case for more open borders for those left behind. One particularly important one which we will address first is discussed by Hein de Haas (2007: 4-5) in his account of the development of the debate about migration and remittances. Particularising an important aspect of Marxian critique of markets to the particular case of remittances, the concern here is that remittances are subject to the whims and caprices of senders and to the anarchic vicissitudes of markets, they are an unavoidably unstable means of assisting those left behind, not least when compared to foreign aid.[16] In order to avoid these problems the demands of justice therefore require that states maintain migration controls and that the richer among them discharge their obligations to the world's poor instead either via foreign aid, foreign direct investment or state-based cash transfers of the kind defended by Oberman, or some combination of these.

It is in this connection, moreover, where our epistemic liberal standpoint makes its first significant contribution to the debate about migration justice, for in building upon the work of authors such as Barry (2011: 33) it provides two reasons to reject the

[16] On the Marxian critique of market anarchy see Marx, K., *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, Moscow, Progress/London, Lawrence and Wishart, (1867, 1885, 1894), 1974, vol. I, pp. 336-7, 449, 457, 472, vol. II, pp. 176, 318-319, 473, vol. III, pp. 260, 881; Engels, F., 'Socialism: utopian and scientific', in L. S. Feuer (ed.) *Marx and Engels: basic writings on politics and philosophy*, Garden City, Doubleday, 1959, pp. 57-8.

instability objection and claim instead that remittances 'are more stable than foreign investment or aid flows to the developing world'. The first reason for this pertains to the erroneous terms of evaluation that the market anarchy or instability objection presupposes and which the epistemic standpoint clarifies. I have discussed elsewhere the philosophical commitments underlying epistemic liberal views on the nature of knowledge and the impact this has upon questions of resource use and distributive justice.[17] Suffice it to say that for exponents of this tradition the important fact about the knowledge of the circumstances that must be taken into account when deciding questions of resource use, including questions pertinent to the transfer of resources across borders, is that for a variety of reasons it is uncentralisable.[18] First, it is knowledge that is dependent upon the subjective valuations of individual agents. For example, what for one agent would be a worthless plot of land because it is blighted by a sticky black substance that makes agriculture impossible, is for another an extremely valuable source of oil. Moreover, and because agents are for the most part not in direct contact with one another, this subjectively-held knowledge is never given to any particular agent in its entirety but is only ever dispersed among them. Third, as preference-shaping but culturally embedded knowledge, the knowledge relevant to adequate decision making about resource use is often tacit in form, with the consequence that agents whose own decisions

[17] See Tebble, A. J., *Epistemic liberalism: a defence*, London, Routledge, 2015, pp.28-33.

[18] By knowledge of the circumstances it is meant knowledge of what counts as a good or a resource, of how valuable either is relative to other valued goods and resources and of which factors of production and combinations thereof should be utilised in producing and distributing them.

about resource use would be different were they to have access to it have no means of taking it into account until it is acted upon by those who possesses it. Finally, this knowledge of the circumstances to which agents must refer in order to execute their plans successfully is, for two reasons, subject to continual change. In the first instance this is because of exogenous factors, such as changes in climatic conditions or the occurrence of natural disasters that impact upon the preferences we may have, and of the availability of resources to satisfy them. Second, and as complex adaptive systems theory helpfully clarifies, the knowledge of the circumstances of which agents must make continual use constantly changes precisely because of the impact of the prior decisions of others.[19] For example, when an unforeseen rush on a desired good or resource occurs, agents must adjust their consumption plans with respect to it. 'To put it briefly,' claims Hayek (1948: 78), 'it is a problem of the utilization of knowledge which is not given to anyone in its totality', but which is nonetheless relevant to agents' decisions leading to the fruition of their plans. Crucially, and to attest to the what we may call the meta-ethical character of this insight, plans are unavoidably impacted in this way regardless of whether they are those of self- or other-interested individuals or associations of either. There exists for epistemic liberals, therefore, no special vantage point from which the seamless and instantaneous coordination of efforts regarding resource use could be realised, either on the part of mutually-distant agents acting alone or in concert, or of an agent of the state seeking from the centre to direct cooperative efforts.

Crucially, the absence of this epistemic vantage point explains why all systems of resource allocation would be *necessarily* unstable relative to an ideal state where

[19] On complexity see Axelrod, R. and Cohen, M. D. (2000).

coordination is fortuitously instantaneous. Because resolving the knowledge problem at a stroke is impossible, the only alternative is to adjust, sometimes unevenly and haphazardly, to new and unforeseen conditions as we learn of them. To object to more open borders on the grounds of the instability of remittances, therefore, is not only to misunderstand the ultimately beneficial rôle that fluctuations play in the process of adjustment to ever-changing complex conditions. It is to assume, falsely, that there is some alternative method of resource transfer that is not susceptible to such changes and is therefore perfectly stable regardless of underlying conditions. Indeed, if our only option were institutions that did *not* permit such allegedly anarchic fluctuations, we would have serious cause for concern. The appropriate conceptual question, therefore, is not whether the economic case for more open borders for those left behind is damaged by the instability of remittances, but whether remittances are more or less stable than a regime of more closed borders that relied far more upon cash transfers, foreign investment, foreign aid, or some combination of these.

In addition to setting the appropriate terms of evaluation, the epistemic standpoint enables us to reconsider what is meant by stability with respect to resource transfer and it is here where it provides instructive a second reason for rejecting the instability objection. There are at least two readings of stability that one may adopt. First, we may understand stability in terms of what *donors* provide. To send the same amount of resource across borders over time would, on this reading, satisfy the requirements of stability. However, there is another more appropriate reading of stability that the instability objection obscures. Here, and in keeping both with our focus on those left behind and with the unavoidably cyclical nature of the economic process to which epistemic liberals draw our

attention, stability properly understood is only ever relative to the *in situ* conditions faced by recipients. On this reading, it matters more that the amount those left behind *receive* is stable relative to changes in their circumstances than whether the amount *sent* remains unchanged. Importantly, it is this more nuanced, context-sensitive, understanding of stability that provides reason to question whether stability of donation is always a good thing as those who advance the instability objection would have us believe. Indeed, the ever-changing nature of the circumstances to which those left behind must respond suggests that it is context-sensitivity and *flexibility* on the part of senders that is required if one is to satisfy the demands of stability.

3. Discretion, moral motivation and the stability of remittances

Whilst these more appropriate terms of evaluation and more nuanced understanding of stability allow us to offer a powerful explanation of the benefits that remittances bring, they do not of themselves provide us with an argument for more open borders. After all, one may object, if remittances are so important why not metaphorically instruct all the residents of Austria to send money as our earlier example suggested, or else follow Oberman and institute a system of state-based cash payments, thus obviating the need for immigrants and the more open borders they require? There is, it seems, no necessary connection between remittances and migration.

Leaving our discussion of Oberman's proposal to section 5, it is in response to this objection that we may explain why the benefits of remittances arise only when they are sent by *migrants* and, therefore, when we have a more rather than less open borders regime. Explaining this relies in the first instance upon two important distinctions, the

first of which pertains to the *mode* of resource transfer, whilst the second takes interest in the *moral motivations* that drive it. With regard to the first we can conceive of a mode of transfer being individualistic and discretionary (such as foreign direct investment or remittances) or collective (such as foreign aid) whilst, with regard to the second, we can conceive of the moral motivations that inform it as being either self-interested or affective. With these two distinctions in mind we can see how foreign investment is likely to be susceptible to fluctuation relative to the needs of those left behind precisely because it is not only an individualistic, discretionary and therefore flexible mode of cross-border resource transfer, but one whose primary motivation is profit. It is because of this underlying motivation, of course, that foreign investment can be erratic with respect to the amounts of money invested. The phenomenon of capital flight is an illuminating example of this - although the fact that capital shifts from one part of the world to another for reasons of profit may be as much explained by the unpredictable and/or predatory behaviour of host governments as it is by the self-interested capriciousness of transnational corporations.

Would immigrant remittances be likely to be subject to their own, non-corporate, version of capital flight? Despite also being individualistic and discretionary, immigrant remittances are not motivated by profit but by sentiment and affection, insofar as they represent flows of money from senders to those whose fortunes they care about in poorer countries. Thus, despite sharing the same individualistic *mode* of resource transfer with foreign direct investment, the fellow-feeling towards others that *motivates* the sending of immigrant remittances makes them considerably more reliable than the former, even during straitened economic circumstances. Indeed if they are unstable this is because

immigrant remittances are susceptible to changes in *government* policy, where a tightening of immigration rules or changes in tax law increase the chances of a reduction in resource flow, rather than because of the affective motivational logic that drives them.[20] To be sure, this is not to claim that remittances should replace foreign direct investment. As we will see in Section 5, for the latter may reach parts of the economy of a poorer country that remittances cannot and regardless of whether borders are more or less open. Rather, their relative stability makes immigrant remittances, and the more rather than less open borders they require, a uniquely beneficial supplement to it.

Despite being premised on a different, collective, mode of decision-making, we may concur with the view that similar affective sentiments motivate the provision of foreign aid. Yet, we should be sceptical of the stability of foreign aid with regard to the *in situ* needs of those left behind, although not because it fluctuates either in line with changes in wider economic and political circumstances that force the budgetary hand of politicians, or because of its susceptibility to use by governments as a tool for the projection of soft power or, more brazenly, as direct leverage over policy formation in recipient states (Oberman, 2015: 247; Hirschman and Bird, 1971). Whilst each of these

[20] It should also be noted, in contrast to Brock's (2017: 157; Brock and Blake 2015: 45) view that remittances have a tendency to decline over time, the cumulative nature of remittances - secured not just by the most recent waves of immigrants but also by their descendants - means that they are not directly susceptible to contractions in *political* hospitality on the part of host societies. Even a sudden restriction of immigration would not immediately issue in a decline in remittances.

would impact upon provision, they do so only over the medium to long-term, precisely because the wheels of politics and governmental policy formation turn relatively slowly.

To obtain a more persuasive explanation of the relative instability of foreign aid and of why remittances are therefore likely to offer a uniquely beneficial means of supplementing it, we need to return to the question of its motivational logic, for it not a mode of provision that is based on affection alone. More specifically, it involves not just the well-intentioned disbursement of funds from richer countries, but their passage through official channels in recipient countries which are at risk of corruption. In contrast, then, to what can be called the *fully* affectionate character of remittances, foreign aid is less stable *relative to the needs of recipients* because it occupies a place midway between immigrant remittances and foreign investment. In contrast to the former which avoid what Oberman (2015, 248) calls 'middlemen', the extent to which foreign aid flows through official channels is the extent to which it is susceptible to the unscrupulous machinations and self-interested predatory behaviour of office holders. As Barry (2011; 35) succinctly puts it, '[a]id strengthens the state of the receiving country relative to its citizens, whereas remittances do the opposite'.

More open borders and epistemic bonds

Of course, one could still doubt that, even if it shows how the individualistic and affective nature of immigrant remittances reveals them to be more stable than foreign aid and foreign direct investment, we are therefore committed to more open borders. As we saw at the beginning of this section, if we want the discretionary flexibility and affective motivation of remittances we could simply direct all the residents of Austria to devote

their productive efforts towards the relief of global poverty. Like foreign aid, such an arrangement would represent an affective mode of transfer but would be coupled with the flexibility of the individualistic and discretionary decision-making of foreign direct investment.

Yet, it is here where epistemic liberalism's contribution becomes apparent in another sense, for it turns out that the individualistic mode and affective motivations underpinning immigrant remittances are necessary but not sufficient factors for a full explanation of why the findings of development economists are likely to confirm their unique benefits. It is because of the bonds of *epistemic familiarity* that persist between immigrants and those they leave behind that enables immigrant remittances to helpfully vary according to the ever-changing *in situ* needs of recipients, thus maintaining stability relative to those needs over time in ways that foreign aid under a more closed borders regime cannot. Immigrants, that is, already know, or can without great cost come to know, what the needs of those left behind are precisely because they know *who* they are.[21] By contrast, and no matter how motivated by ethical concerns all the residents of Austria would be, or how much discretion they may enjoy, the persistent bonds of familiarity required for resource transfer stability to those left behind under ever-changing conditions would be few and far between and quite possibly non-existent.

[21] Indeed, Vargas-Silva and Ruiz (2008) suggest that remittances are so flexible as to be *countercyclical*. That is, precisely because of their affective motivations and the discretion that they enjoy with regard to decision-making, migrants send *more* when there is a downturn in their home countries. See also Barry (2011: 35-6) who highlights how close bonds ensure that remittances are spent properly.

Assistance provided at arm's length by all the residents of Austria may, even in a world that tolerated strict controls upon migration, be imbued with the best of intentions. But it is doubtful that it would be put to as effective use as it would in a world with fewer such controls.[22]

Our argument about epistemic constraints upon resource use, coupled with our insights into the moral motivations, mode of transfer and epistemic familiarity underlying different methods of assistance thus explain why '[immigrant] remittances are one of the *less* volatile sources of foreign exchange earnings for developing countries' (Ratha, Mohapatra and Xu 2008, 12). The problem for foreign direct investment with regard to poverty alleviation, then, is that it represents an effective mode of resource transfer but with an inappropriate motivational logic for the purposes of stability, whilst foreign aid and non-immigrant remittances represent the reverse: an appropriately structured motivational logic but with an ineffective mode of transfer. To be sure, none of this is to suggest that we should do away with foreign direct investment and foreign aid, despite their relative shortcomings. Rather, it is to make the more modest claim that these shortcomings would go unaddressed under a less open borders regime to the extent that this would stifle the epistemic benefits of bonds of familiarity across borders. Precisely because they are unique to it, the epistemic gains to be had from immigrant remittances

[22] Similarly, and because of the slow turning wheels of politics and the epistemic distance between decision-makers and those they seek to assist, foreign aid is predictably less flexible relative to evolving needs, despite its similar affective and other-regarding motivations.

are only possible in a more rather than less open borders regime, regardless of what we expect with regard to foreign direct investment and foreign aid.

4. Sufficiency, the misallocation objection and state signalling

Does our rejection of the instability objection clinch the argument for more open borders as a means of addressing global poverty and with it the migratory pressures that lead to anti-immigration sentiment in receiving countries? Perhaps not, for one could claim that, regardless of how large or stable they are, immigrant remittances will be insufficient for the purposes of poverty alleviation. This objection is an important one, for to the extent that remittances are *in*sufficient the force of our case is accordingly diminished, especially given that alternatives such as foreign aid and foreign direct investment do not have to rely upon borders being open, or at least *as* open.

Importantly, however, the insufficiency objection fails because, as suggested above, it misconstrues the epistemic argument for more open borders as an epistemic argument *against* foreign aid and foreign direct investment. Our political choice regarding these different means of addressing global poverty is not a zero sum one between mutually incompatible options. Rather, it is an argument about the rôle liberty of movement should play in our efforts to improve the situation of those left behind, insofar as it may be *combined* with and *enhance* other means of poverty alleviation that over the long-term, reduce the pressure to migrate. Indeed, as Barry (2011: 33) points out, because they are dependent upon the degree to which migration is permitted in a way in which aid and investment are not, remittances are supplementary to these alternatives and as such complimentary to rather than competitive with them.

It is here, moreover, where our epistemic standpoint clarifies an additional advantage of more open borders with respect to the transformation of the conditions and push-factors that lead to migratory pressure with which migration sceptics are concerned. Here the central idea is that there is a symbiotic relationship between migratory flows in one direction and immigrant remittance flows in the other that constitutes a vital signalling mechanism for agents of the state as they seek to augment their *ex situ* knowledge of poverty with the *in situ* knowledge of migrants and those they leave behind. By taking advantage of this state signalling mechanism agents of both poorer and wealthier states may combine data on migration and remittance flows with big data and predictive analytic techniques such as geospatial predictive modelling to bridge the epistemic gap between themselves and those they seek to assist.[23] As the case of the Mexico-United States border shows, the discrete movements of migrants across borders and the subsequent flow of remittances in the other direction combine to act as a signalling mechanism that gives a clearer idea of local needs and of what, therefore, would count under ever-changing conditions as a sufficient response to them.[24] Importantly, these epistemic developmental gains that reduce pressure to migrate over the longer-term are only had to the extent that we have a more rather than less permissive

[23] For a non-technical introduction see Finlay (2014).

[24] According to figures from the United Nations Development Program report for 2004, for example, of the 32 Mexican states the highest recipients of remittances were Zacatecas and Michoacán which respectively occupy places 25 and 28 on that country's human development index. UNDP Report 2004, http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2004

migratory regime. The extent to which frontiers are closed will be the extent to which states, richer and poorer alike, cannot avail themselves of this *in situ* knowledge as they respectively implement foreign aid and national development programmes. Rather, then, than deciding what a sufficient overall amount of resource-transfer from richer to poorer nations is themselves in a more closed borders regime, and in doing so run the risk of over providing or under providing relative to the needs of recipients, both poorer and wealthier states are more likely to make better decisions about national development and foreign aid respectively when guided by the patterns of behaviour of those most familiar with the circumstances of poverty which they seek to ameliorate.[25]

This misallocation objection to more open borders

Of course, we do not just want to have a means of ascertaining what a sufficient level of of resources for those left behind would be, but also of how these would be most efficaciously employed. It is here where another objection to more open borders, based not upon the instability or insufficiency of remittances but upon their alleged allocational inefficiency, has been advanced to differing degrees of specificity in the literature. Again, these objections are worth considering at length insofar as they impact upon our broader claim about remittances stimulating the development required to lower migratory pressures upon wealthier states over the long-term.

At the most general level it may be suggested that immigrant remittances follow the same unfortunate logic as their free market cousin, foreign direct investment, where

[25] For example, in deciding how to implement development strategies such as three-for-one matching programmes (Brock and Blake, 2015: 56, n. 23).

precisely because the economic, political and legal environment is often less certain resources do not go to the countries that need them most. Tellingly, this unhappy result of the exercise of economic liberty is not hostage to the empirical data that confirms it.[26] Rather, it is a theoretically predictable consequence of the profit-driven rather than affective nature of markets, where foreign direct investment will only seek out those environments that promise the healthiest return. Of course, one may respond that the objection is more telling against those who advance the case for *less* rather than more open borders. The more that borders are open, after all, the more likely it is that there will be immigrants from a wider variety of countries sending money home. Yet, even if this is granted, and again because of the individualistic and discretionary nature of immigrant remittances, there is no guarantee that they will be allocated appropriately, for example on a regional level *within* recipient countries, even if they are sent to the right *countries*.

Taking this objection to a greater degree of specificity, it has been claimed that there is also no guarantee that those individuals who need remittances most will receive them. As a range of authors (Higgins 2008, 529-30; Carens 2013, 233; Oberman 2015, 241) have pointed out, remittances do not take into consideration the problem of effective demand, where a minimum of resources is required to migrate in the first place so that

[26] Of the top 20 countries in cumulative receipt of foreign investment to the end of 2014 none were from the developing world whilst only four - China, Brazil, India and Mexico - were newly-industrialised countries. Indeed, of the top 10 recipients all but China were advanced industrialised economies. See https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2198rank.html

remittances may flow back to those left behind. Given that the world's very poorest cannot afford to cross borders, it follows that more open borders would only be of benefit to those who are relatively well-off in poorer countries (Pogge 1997, 14; Brock 2009a, 205). Finally, there is no guarantee that, even if they were sent to the right *people*, immigrant remittances would be well *spent*. Brock (2009a, 206) adopts this line of argument when claiming that the vast bulk of remittances are spent on day-to-day living and consumer items rather than on investments that may stimulate economic development. Even, then, if it is unreasonable to deny that spending on consumer items at least benefits local market traders, this is to ignore the more important developmental gains to be had from longer-term and more transformative forms of investment, such as those to be had with respect to major infrastructure.

Similarly, to the underlying logic of the stability and sufficiency objections, however, what may be called the misallocation objection in its various guises is also premised upon the existence of an ideal standard against which immigrant remittances may be held to fall short and that appears impervious to the problem of the uncentralisability of the *in situ* knowledge relevant to poverty alleviation. Given the strong epistemic reasons for believing that it is not evident what such an allocation would be, given that the *in situ* knowledge of the circumstances is not given in any conveniently accessible way, it follows that our judgment about the susceptibility of immigrant remittances to the allocation objection in its various guises must in the first instance be a relative one between it and other modes of cross border allocation. The important question, therefore, is not whether one should reject more open borders because of the allocational imperfections of immigrant remittances that, relative to an ideal, fail to make

up for the costs of brain-drain. It is whether they would do better than the allocation emergent from a less open borders regime that relied more upon foreign direct investment and foreign aid.

Having already questioned the stability and sufficiency of foreign direct investment on the grounds of its profit-oriented rather than affective motivational logic and individualistic mode of operation, it stands to reason that it would be equally ineffective as a mechanism for the direct allocation of resources to the world's poor. By contrast, it would be reasonable to think that even under a less open borders regime foreign aid would not be susceptible to misallocation. Precisely because it is both an affective and collective decision-making procedure, foreign aid could be carefully targeted and this, coupled with the fact that less open borders would mean less brain-drain, ought to show that the advantage lies not with proponents of more open borders, but with those who are sceptical of them. Yet, as was the case with the questions of stability and sufficiency, we should doubt the persuasiveness of this argument, especially when the epistemic distance inherent in centralised poverty alleviation mechanisms such as foreign aid or 'three for one' (Brock and Blake, 2015: 56 n. 23) remittance matching programs deployed by migrant source countries are considered. First, as a resource transfer mechanism whose decision-makers are distant from the conditions faced by those they seek to help, these would allow for a relatively minimal degree of *in situ* decision-making about resource allocation. The consequence of this is that knowledge of the circumstances necessary for deciding questions of allocation would be radically underused relative to that exploited by remittance-sending immigrants under a more open

borders regime. Furthermore, and in addition to its epistemic drawbacks, the allocational efficacy of foreign aid is likely to be undermined by the distorting effects of corruption.[27]

The problems for foreign aid in a world of less open borders do not end here. If one assumes along with Higgins (2008) the existence of gendered, racialised and class-based structures and processes of favouritism and discrimination in poorer countries, then it stands to reason that these would also be operative at the point of disbursement of foreign aid in a manner that may be at variance with what the state signalling mechanism of migration and remittance flows would suggest ought to be the case. Indeed, it is here where our two counter-arguments to the allocation objection coalesce. Because of the existence of structural processes of discrimination in the public sphere of poorer countries, the more open borders approach is to be seen at its most virtuous precisely because it affords a means of *avoiding* both well-intentioned but disconnected decision-makers in donor countries and political middle men in recipient countries who, presumably, are selected from the more privileged strata of society. Oberman (2015, 248) also acknowledges the pitfalls of foreign aid but, mindful of what he claims are the rights-violating deficiencies of remittances, opts instead for a regime of *state*-based cash transfer. These, he claims 'bypass middlemen, allowing the poor to decide how resources are spent,' a point to which we will return presently.

[27] According to Transparency International Suharto's regime in Indonesia embezzled up to $35bn, whilst Mobutu Sese Seko of the former Zaïre is said to have plundered up to $6bn of public money, much of it development aid. On this see *Global Corruption Report 2004*, London, Pluto Press, 2004, p. 13.

By contrast, a more open borders regime enables those left behind to respond directly to their circumstances, or to follow what Oberman (2015, 247) has called *in situ* ways of addressing desperate poverty. Such a regime, that is, is uniquely placed to harness not only the discretionary decision-making and affective sentiments of immigrants but also their first-hand *knowledge* of the places they leave behind so that remittances are allocated in a manner consistent with the ever-changing exigencies of underlying local conditions as communicated to them by those left behind. By contrast, in a less open borders regime decision-makers concerned with the plight of the global poor must make the vast majority of their judgments based upon *ex situ* knowledge. For this reason, and contrary to the misallocation critique, it is foreign aid under a more closed borders regime that stands to be considered a relatively epistemically blunt and context insensitive instrument with respect to the allocation of resources to the global poor under ever-changing complex conditions. Of course, this does not mean that more open borders would provide *perfect* signalling, as the case of Mexico also makes clear.[28] Nevertheless, there are strong reasons - rooted in the context sensitivity of their individualistic and affective mode of operation - to suppose that remittances are likely to do so better than foreign aid with less open borders.[29]

[28] See footnote 24 above.

[29] Peer-to-peer payment systems such as blockchain based remittances cut out corporate middlemen such as banks and remittance agencies. Liberty, therefore, is not to be read only in contradistinction to state centralisation. It also opens the way for the realisation of different forms of private economic relationship.

We can invoke the benefits of more open borders to respond to the other versions of the misallocation objection. Thus, whilst we may concede that immigrant remittances enter poor countries in the imperfect way that Pogge and Higgins suggest, this objection nonetheless fails to consider their *indirect* consequences insofar as they act as stimuli for broader economic development. Similarly, to the effects of foreign direct investment, the remittance buck very rarely, if ever, stops with the family of the immigrant who sends them and, as Oberman (2015, 242) succinctly claims, 'people can benefit from remittances even if they do not receive them'. Rather, as Barry (2011: 33) points out, remittances become significant although unintended stimuli for local development that induce simulative ripple effects beyond. Here increased demand leads not only to more hiring opportunities for employers in the retail sector, but also for those further up the supply chain. It may be the case, therefore, that a large proportion of remittances are spent out of the self-interested motivations of those who receive them, but in this way they are also likely to be of benefit to known and unknown others who provide the goods and services they are now in a position to acquire. So, even if they do not fill the gaps left in the economy by skilled emigrants on a one-to-one basis, the fact that remittances are likely to fill *other* gaps means that the claim that more open borders will issue in net losses for those left behind is to be greeted with scepticism.

What of Brock's concern that immigrant remittances are only spent on day-to-day items? *Prima facie* this may be the most powerful objection, precisely because of their affective nature. Yet, we should pause before accepting it, not least because the

empirical evidence suggests that it is untrue.[30] Similarly to the claim that those who need them most will not receive them, even if it were true that remittances are spent largely on day-to-day items, or even on status-based conspicuous consumption, this omits not only the *indirect* benefits and positive economic ripple effects of remittance-based consumption. As *supplementary* income that otherwise would not have existed without emigration, remittances free up the funds that those left behind would have had to rely upon for day-to-day expenses for other longer-term investments in health, education and the like (Barry, 2011: 33).

Misallocation, state signalling and the net effects of brain-drain

Considerations of stability, sufficiency, allocation and state signalling have important implications for how we assess the force of the brain-drain objection to skilled migration raised by authors such as Brock. We will recall that in advancing her case for qualified emigration restrictions, Brock (Brock and Blake, 2015) accepts that our judgment will be dependent upon a calculation of the net effects of remittances and skilled migration brain-drain.

The first problem here is that because Brock (Brock and Blake, 2015: 42-5) subtly misrepresents the terms of evaluation of the case for more open borders by considering

[30] According to the World Bank, for example, remittances to Eastern Europe and Central Asia were spent on the following items: food and clothing 31%, education 14%, home repair 13%, savings 12%, property purchase 7%, medical expenses 6%, business investment 4%, special events 4%, other expenses/contingency 4%, car purchases 3%, land purchase 1.5%, charity 0.5%. Source: www.bbc.co.uk, 16/01/2007.

only the remittances of skilled migrants. Skilled immigrant remittances, we will recall, are not all that would be permitted by more open borders. Rather, and beyond the other effects that we have seen she already concedes, she would need to consider the benefit of emigrant remittances in the round versus the brain-drain cost of *skilled* emigration.

Second, any adequate assessment of net effects would also have to incorporate the unique benefit of state signalling emergent from more open borders for the purposes of foreign aid and national development - and in particular the state signalling emergent from the movement and spending patterns of unskilled emigrants who, unlike their skilled compatriots, are more likely to come from the poorer strata of poorer societies where development needs are most acute. Likely gains through state signalling, however, are absent from Brock's net effects argument. Yet, once both factors are conceded we have conceptual reason to claim that Brock's argument that more open borders would result in a net loss to sending societies is at best open to question and at worst doubtful. Indeed, acting upon the brain-drain critique to restrict migration from poorer to wealthier countries is likely to end up being counter-productive from the standpoint both of those in poorer states who desire faster rates of development and of those in wealthier states who desire lower levels of immigration over the long term. By its very nature a less open borders regime would thwart the very process by which poorer countries decisions about national development and those of wealthier nations about foreign aid could be responsive to the ever-changing *in situ* circumstances, thus stimulating quicker rather than slower development which over the longer term will reduce the pressure to migrate.

5. More open borders, state signalling and obligations of justice

Thus far I have defended more open borders and the immigrant remittances that they make possible from a variety of objections. In doing so I have not only shown those objections to be unpersuasive, but that they may indeed be more telling against a regime of less open borders that requires a greater emphasis upon foreign direct investment and foreign aid. Of course, it is some considerable distance from offering epistemic reasons for extending the range of moral subjects who may benefit from more open borders in a way that may persuade Blake and Carens, to doing the same for Brock, Miller and Wellman. Yet, our epistemic standpoint gives reason for those sceptical of more open borders to not only endorse them, but to do so in a manner consistent with what they have to say about the obligations of justice that may be owed to a) global strangers by wealthier nations and b) to the poor of poorer nations by their own governments.

It will be recalled that, along with Wellman (2008), Miller (1995) defends special obligations of justice to fellow nationals.[31] This, however, should not be construed as a stance of no obligations towards global strangers and both Miller (1995, 73-80; 2007, 163-200, 231-261; 2016a, 20-37) and Wellman (2008; 2011, 57-78) are clear that, whilst not the *same* as those owed to fellow nationals, obligations owed to global strangers do exist and the state has a duty to meet them. Brock (2009a: 190-210; 2009b; 2016: 9; Brock and Blake 2015: 24-35), too, accepts that rich states have such obligations. The question therefore becomes how we are best able to identify and discharge these obligations for, as Carens insightfully points out in his discussion of the duties of rich

[31] See also Carens (2016: 135-141) for a discussion of what richer states may do to combat brain-drain.

states, 'there are lots of puzzles about the best way to eliminate poverty or promote economic development or reduce global inequalities' (2016: 140).

It is useful in this connection to return to Brock's (2009a: 206) objection that immigrant remittances are not spent effectively. Whilst not needing to accept her account of the direct and indirect effects of remittances, we can take inspiration from its spirit and distinguish between spending on small and medium scale projects - such as microenterprises, small businesses and the construction of health clinics and schools - and large-scale projects such as water, transport and energy infrastructure. As we have already seen in the case of the former, immigrant remittances are likely to play a constructive rôle because a significant proportion of them is devoted to healthcare, education and the setting up of new businesses, with the direct and indirect benefits that these imply.[32] With respect to major infrastructure projects, however, Brock's objection, and therefore the case for foreign aid under a less open borders regime, may be stronger. Indeed, one may venture that it is foreign aid rather than immigrant remittances that ought to be responsible in this case, precisely because senders will either not be concerned or, if they are, be in no economic position to provide major infrastructure.[33]

[32] One study has estimated that almost one third of the capital invested in microenterprises within the ten Mexican states with the highest rate of migration to the United States is associated with remittances. On this see Woodruff, C., and Zenteno, R. (2001). See also Oberman (2015, 242) who cites studies that show that remittances are not spent just on day-to-day living.

[33] The foreign aid data confirm that resources for major infrastructure are transferred to those states that need them most rather than to those that may offer a healthy return. See

This notwithstanding, and as both the supporters and detractors of foreign aid suggest, one should be mindful of politics' often disastrous track record in making decisions about major infrastructure. Follies, bridges to nowhere and variants thereof are not the preserve of the rich and thoughtless.[34] Furthermore, and as we have seen with respect to the sufficiency and allocation of resources to those left behind, it is here where more open borders serve an invaluable rôle in improving the performance of the *state* with respect to the global poor. If we assume that the association of poverty and migratory outflows with the *absence* of major infrastructure is not coincidental, by tracking migrant and remittance flows wealthier states will be more likely to correctly identify the ends to which foreign aid ought to be put in the interests of justice. In the case of major infrastructure this would be a demand-led process where regions and localities undergoing development stimulated by immigrant remittances - manifested in increased home building and improvement, the erection of new schools and clinics and the expansion of local trading centres - would be those most likely *not* to have the infrastructure in place to accommodate it. But it is not just the decisions of wealthier states that stand to gain from more open borders. Poorer states, too, could employ similar

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http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD?order=wbapi_data_value_2013+wbapi_data_value+wbapi_data_value-last&sort=desc

[34] For a sceptical view of major infrastructure projects funded by foreign aid from a viewpoint that is broadly sympathetic to development aid see Banerjee, A., and Duflo, E. (2011). For a sceptical view from a standpoint that is also sceptical of foreign aid see Easterly (2007).

geospatial predictive modelling techniques to ascertain to which ends the infrastructure aspects of their national development strategies may be best put.

To be sure, and as the case of Mexico makes clear, there is not always a perfect correlation between emigration, remittances and poverty.[35] Moreover, there is also a danger that by its very nature our epistemic standpoint may miss key indicators of deprivation and desperate need, most obviously where *negligible* emigration and remittance flows could indicate poverty so egregious as to make leaving prohibitively costly. Yet, even in such cases state signalling has a rôle to play insofar as it may indicate *negatively* which regions require enhanced development measures. Particularly in cases where this is because of even higher rates of poverty than those regions enjoying a migration/remittances dividend, the absence of such bottom-up signalling coupled with regional and sub-reginal development date alerts state actors to target resources to those places that run the risk of being overlooked.

Thus, more open borders not only aid us in identifying what these obligations are, but how they are most efficaciously discharged. Rather, then, than have officers of the state decide such questions themselves, and in doing so run the risk of underspending relative to the needs of recipients, a more liberal stance toward migration is likely to be required in order for them to discharge the state's obligations - to both its own citizens and to global strangers - that opponents of more open borders concede exist, whatever these turn out to be. In this sense states could, as concerned actors, repurpose their migration policies as both barometers of needs and as one of the means to respond to

[35] See footnote note 24 above.

them, rather than rely upon the epistemically distant determinations of those officers of the state who dispense foreign aid or pursue national development programmes.

State based cash transfers and the problem of ex situ knowledge

We noted at the beginning of this enquiry that Oberman provides an array of empirical evidence to suggest that immigrant remittances are an effective way to combat poverty, and we have endorsed this view by offering a set of conceptual reasons that explain why the empirical data is likely to turn out as he suggests. Yet, despite this concurrence, Oberman ultimately distances himself from the stance defended here because of the deleterious effects of open borders on an important human right: the right to stay in one's country of origin. '[I]mmigration policy,' he (Oberman, 2015: 249) claims, 'should be regarded as a policy of last resort' to address poverty precisely because it undermines the right to stay in one's own country by presenting an exit option that individuals with a right to live tolerably decent lives in their own country should not have to choose. I tis on the basis of this, therefore, that Oberman (2015: 248) suggests an alternative means of *in situ* poverty alleviation in the form of cash transfers from wealthier states would be preferable.

We will not be concerned with the veracity of Oberman's claim about the existence of a right to stay in one's country of origin, but our epistemic standpoint does provide other reasons to reject his view, even if we accept that such a right exists. First, and given that the individual attachments and possibilities that play such an important rôle in generating the right to stay in Oberman's (2015, 246-7) account are often local, it is not clear why he should not also be committed to the view that migration *within* states -

for instance across state or provincial boundaries, or from the countryside to cities - should be similarly restricted. Beyond this, there are strong conceptual reasons to believe that state-based cash transfers from wealthier states to poorer individuals in poorer states would be likely to suffer from similar problems to *non*-immigrant remittances, as our metaphorical example of morally motivated Austrians highlighted earlier. It is unclear, for instance, how state actors in a world of less open borders would decide competently, on the basis of their *ex situ* knowledge, who should be in receipt of cash transfers, how much they should receive and on what they should be spent. Thus, whilst closer than foreign aid to the position defended here, it is unclear whether the result of a system of state-based cash transfers would be the kind of context-sensitive *in situ* processes that Oberman favours, rather than an *ex situ* one with all the drawbacks that we have suggested would be likely to arise. Similarly, and to the degree that his last resort stance leads to a counterfactual state of affairs where fewer migrants gain entry than would otherwise have been the case, Oberman's view leaves unanswered the problem of how poorer states may make good decisions about their *own* national development via the assistance of state signalling. It may be the case, then, that '[s]tates violate the human right to stay if they fail to offer the global poor a means to achieve minimally decent life in their own country' (Oberman, 2015: 240), but it is unclear how, to the extent that it discourages migration, Oberman's view would assist them in doing so. Thus, given the context-sensitive transformative effects of their operation, it remains the case that, *pace* Oberman, more open borders ought to be a policy of first rather than last resort, at least as far as the interests of those left behind are concerned.

Contrary to the claims that the benefits of more open borders are at best negligible once brain-drain effects are factored in, they offer a uniquely beneficial way for government agencies to ascertain how their obligations of justice to global strangers are best discharged, insofar as remittance flows indicate *in situ* needs in a way that political decision-making structures may either miss, or distort. It is not necessarily the case, then, that the positive benefits of more open borders are likely to be cancelled out by brain-drain, for this net costs critique crucially overlooks their benefits. Rather, we have strong reason to believe that the immigrant remittances that more open borders make possible are likely to be more stable and sufficient, more rational with respect to allocation, and induce beneficial ripple effects in the economies of poorer countries. Moreover, the state signalling mechanism that more open borders also they make possible assists in the efficacious targeting of foreign aid and the effective delivery of national development programmes.[36] Indeed, far from it being the case that more open borders will issue in a net loss for those left behind, we have strong conceptual reasons to claim that their net economic effects are likely to be positive for those left behind.

This final consequence of our defence of more open borders returns us to the stake that liberals have in defending their position in times of increased scepticism about immigration. Precisely because our argument offers an account of the transformation of the economic conditions that motivate migration, the interests of those who desire lower levels of migration in the future, at least over the long-term are best served by loosening

[36] See also Ypi (2008, 409). Indeed, and regardless of the signalling mechanism they also make possible, in the specific case of Africa the value of remittances sent by skilled immigrants outweighs the cost of educating them (Easterly and Nyarko 2008).

entry restrictions in the present.[37] Those concerned with the poverty of strangers, therefore, are not the only ones who should find the case for more open borders persuasive. Those who for a variety of reasons are sceptical of immigration and wish to see it reduced now have at least one reason to endorse them as well.

To include the moral standing and interests of those left behind is both feasible and desirable for defenders of more open borders because doing so introduces a new set of arguments that strengthens their position. Moreover, those sceptical of this viewpoint also have reason to endorse it. As Carens (2016: 141) helpfully points out, there are at least some occasions when, despite the many puzzles that we may face - as philosophers, activists, concerned citizens or officers of the state - what we are required to provide as a matter of justice *can* be known. One of them is that all states provide more open borders.

6. Conclusion

In breaking with the dominant paradigm that focuses either upon either migrants or the already-resident, we have offered a new and distinctive defence of more open borders that considers those that migrants leave behind in their countries of origin. The most obvious benefit of more open borders is that they make immigrant remittances possible

[37] Of course, and as studies of the 'migration hump' have shown (Martin, 1994), it may be the case that development stimulated by remittances leads to a short- to medium-term *increase* in migratory pressure. Yet, given that the migration hump refers to the *transition* from medium income to higher income status (where such pressures decrease), even if it is the medium-term result of more open borders, maintaining them despite this will mean that it is utlimately overcome more quickly.

which in turn are likely to address the *in situ* needs and interests of those left behind in ways that other methods of resource transfer cannot emulate in their absence. Moreover, in advancing this case we have shown not only why expanding the range of subjects whose interests ought to be considered relevant to debate about justice and migration is a strategy that those who endorse more open borders ought to adopt because it augments and fortifies their own position. We have also shown how those who are sceptical of more open borders are now required to offer an account that explains how, in the absence of more open borders, poverty may be as adequately addressed and obligations of justice to global strangers as effectively discharged as they would otherwise be, and even if these are less demanding than those owed to fellow nationals. Finally, these considerations provide another set of reasons for those sceptical of immigration in wealthier migrant-receiving countries to endorse them. For, if the likely effects of more open borders are as I have suggested, then more open borders represent a means of reducing migratory pressure in the long-term by assisting migrant-sending countries to reduce poverty at home as speedily as possible.

There are doubtless numerous objections to the epistemic liberal view of migration justice. One important one, that concedes much of the thrust of this *economic* case for more open borders, is that the benefits of immigrant remittances for those left behind represent little more than a sticking plaster on the deep structural wounds that are global poverty's sources. That is, proponents of more open borders and immigrant remittances fail to consider the question of how a sending society's *institutions* are to be improved if citizens, particularly educated citizens, are incentivised to leave, thus making

it less likely that these countries will exit poverty.[38] Such an objection, made by Brock (Brock and Blake 2015, 38-41; Brock 2016a; 2017: 157, n. 6) and Ypi (2008, 409), is worthy of a lengthy response. It is, unfortunately, one that will have to be left until another occasion in a broader epistemic case for more open borders for those left behind.[39]

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[38] One could respond here that this is no argument against more open borders. If it is true at all it only demonstrates that more open borders are *neutral* with respect to development and not that they make matters *worse*.

[39] See Tebble, A. J., 'More open borders and deep structural transformation', *Critical Review of Social and Political Philosophy*, 2019, doi: 10.1080/13698230.2019.1565566. The problem of deep structure also complicates Oberman's cash transfers insofar as they address the material *effects* of poverty rather than their underlying *causes*.

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